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THE WAY IN WHICH THE ORGANIZATION OF COLLEGE DEPARTMENTS AFFECTS THE PERFORMANCE AND ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE FACULTY.

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THE EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS ON THE PERFORMANCE AND ATTITUDES OF COLLEGE FACULTY MEMBERS WERE STUDIED. CAUSES FOR FACULTY SATISFACTION WITH THEIR CHAIRMAN, GENERAL JOB SATISFACTION, AND LOYALTY TO THE COLLEGE WERE SOUGHT. QUESTIONNAIRES WERE RECEIVED FROM 444 FACULTY MEMBERS IN 12 LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES. RELATIONSHIPS WERE PREDICTED ON THE BASIS OF SIMILAR RESEARCH, BUT NO RELATIONSHIPS WERE SUBSTANTIATED WHEN EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL DATA WERE CORRELATED. THE STUDY WAS EXTENDED TO THE CLARITY OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS IN COLLEGE. CLARITY WAS FOUND RELATED TO LACK OF CONFLICT BETWEEN FACULTY AND OFFICIALS AND TO THE BASES OF POWER ATTRIBUTED TO DEPARTMENTAL DEANS. THREE SEPARATE TOPICS WERE DISCUSSED AND SUMMARIZED IN THE REPORT--(1) ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS, (2) ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND THEIR CLARITY, AND (3) DETERMINANTS OF CLARITY IN ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS. (RS)

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FINAL REPORT

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
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Cooperative Research Project No. 5-8384
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Jerald G. Bachman

October, 1966

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Survey Research Center
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Ann Arbor, Michigan

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# INTRODUCTION

This final report is composed of three separate sections or papers. The first paper describes the research that was a direct outcome of the activities proposed to the Office of Education. Here is described an analysis of the importance of college departments and their chairmen for the satisfaction and loyalty of departmental members. As an outgrowth of this investigation and data analysis, attention was directed toward another variable, which was more properly investigated by using the college as a unit of analysis. This variable, the clarity of goals in the college, is subjected to investigation in the remaining two papers in the present report. The first of these papers examines the nature of goal clarity and its relationship to the particular goals seen as important by faculty and officials in the college. The final paper in the report concerns the organizational determinants of clarity in goals.

Although the research was carried out under the general direction of the principal investigator, the work was implemented primarily by Dr. George F. Wieland. The authorship of the three papers accurately reflects this division of effort.

# FACULTY SATISFACTION AND THE DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRMAN: A STUDY OF ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS IN LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

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The University of Michigan

Despite the fact that the academic department has come to have a powerful influence upon both faculty and students in liberal arts colleges (Rudy, 1960), much of the research literature dealing with departments has been on only a descriptive level. A good deal of discussion has weighed the favorable and unfavorable aspects of departmental organizations (Henderson, 1960; Walker, 1960), and many writers have concentrated upon descriptions of the functions of the department and the role of the department chairman (Doyle, 1953; Heiges, 1955; Woodburne, 1958; Corsen, 1960; Millett, 1962).

Very little of this work is based upon empirical study of department members and chairman. An important exception is the work of Caplow and McGee (1948), who based much of their discussion upon an extensive interview survey. Their research included descriptions of the relative influence of deans, chairman, and other faculty over such matters as the selection of new faculty. A further contribution was made by Hemphill (1957), who examined variations in departmental characteristics. In a study of 22 college departments he found that "reputation for being well administered' was positively related to the chairman's use of "Consideration" and his ability to "Initiate Structure." The present study presents data on the effects of academic departmental characteristics, including expecially the chairman's relationships with others, on the satisfactions of the departmental members and their loyalty or desire to remain at their present institution.

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The data reported here were gathered by Jerald G. Bachman and A. Lincoln Fisch under a grant by the Carnegie Corporation, Arnold Tannenbaum, principal investigator. The work reported here was carried out with the support of the Office of Education, Small Contract Program, Project S-140, Jerald G. Bachman, principal investigator.

One way of dealing with the lack of research on the departmental chairman is to draw upon the findings obtained in other organizational settings. The observation has been made that the role of department chairman is much like that of the working foreman in industry; each is a "man-in-the-middle" (Caplow and McGee, 1948). The chairman, like the foreman, must represent his "subordinates" to higher administration, and the administration to his subordinates. A study in industry by Pelz (1951, 1952) indicates that subordinate satisfaction with a supervisor depends in part upon the supervisor's influence with his own supervisors; the influential supervisor can "deliver the goods" for his men. A recent study of account executives engaged in the sale of intangibles (Bachman, Smith and Slesinger, 1966) shows similar results; satisfaction (and performance) tends to be higher when the office manager is perceived as highly influential over "how the office is run." Data from 31 different departments of a service organization show that units in which men are highly loyal to their department are also units in which the departmental manager has a great deal of influence over departmental affairs (Likert, 1961). Perhaps it is also true that the chairman of a college department with satisfied and loyal members is a chairman with a high degree of influence, in short, a "strong" chairman.

It is obvious that the fashion by which influence is achieved may vary considerably. Threats may be used to motivate subordinates as well as "reasoning" or other methods. One may expect that the mode by which influence is achieved will have differing effects on the satisfaction of the subordinates or influenced individuals. French and Raven (1960) have distinguished five different "bases of power" or kinds of power relationships between individuals. In a study of account executives and their office managers, Bachman, Smith and Slesinger (1966)

found that satisfaction was positively associated with certain types of influence relationships and negatively associated with other types. Satisfaction was positively associated with "expert" power (based on competence and experience) and "referent" power (based upon personal admiration) but it was negatively associated with "legitimate" power (based upon the "rights" of the supervisor) and "reward" and "coercive" power (based upon the potential use of positive and negative sanctions).

Communication processes have received much attention in studies of group dynamics. The ease or directness with which one can communicate with the central person in the group (the "leader") has been shown to determine satisfaction (Bavelas, 1950). Cohesive groups, or groups in which there is high satisfaction and low turnover or desire to leave, are groups with high levels of communication activity among the members generally (Cartwright and Zander, 1960). Turning to studies of large organizations, we find some support for a positive relationship between communication activity and satisfaction or loyalty. The ease of feeding ideas upward to one's supervisor is positively associated with subordinate loyalty, as is downward communication by the supervisor (Likert, 1961). In the professional setting of community general hospitals, it was found that nurses are more satisfied with their immediate superior according to the extent the superior (a) explains things; (b) asks for information, explanation, suggestions, or opinions; and (c) expresses appreciation (Georgopoulos and Mann, 1964). Thus, it appears that the incidence of at least certain kinds of communication between departmental members and the departmental chairman may be positively associated with member satisfaction, as well as loyalty to the organization.

A final object of investigation in the present study concerns the degree of emphasis of the departmental chairman upon the alternative goals of the liberal arts college and its faculty. It is probably true that higher positions or more important roles in a group or organization are associated with a greater embodiment of collective goals. Assuming that faculty members as professionals have internalized the professional goals of their organization (see, e.g., Etzioni, 1964), the goals of teaching and research, we might expect the emphasis or encouragement of these goals by the chairman will be associated with faculty satisfaction. But since colleges have both teaching and research as more or less equally important and sometimes conflicting goals, it is not readily apparent whether a chairman's emphasis on resarch or on teaching will be more highly related to departmental member satisfaction, and we shall leave the relative magnitudes of these relationships as an open question. However, it is somewhat likely that an emphasis on the goal of community service will show less of a relationship with satisfaction, since service is probably a less important goal to faculty members and such unimportant features of the job generally show little relationship to job satisfaction (Vroom, 1964). Regarding institutional loyalty, it is more likely that the chairman's teaching emphasis, and not his research emphasis, will show a positive association. A research emphasis is likely to encourage a "cosmopolitan" outlook (and not a "local" outlook), with peers in other institutions as a reference group, and with a resulting greater propensity to transfer commitment to another institution (Caplow and McGee, 1958; Gouldner, 1957 - 1958).

In summary, then, the present study attempts an empirical investigation of some aspects of the departmental chairman's job and the effects of these on the satisfactions of the departmental member and his loyalty to the college. Primarily

on the basis of research findings in rather different organizational settings, predictions have been made regarding the relationships of a number of departmental (or chairman) characteristics -- such as influence, bases of compliance, and communication -- to the satisfactions and loyalties of departmental members.

## METHOD

The organizations studied here are all 12 members of a regional association of liberal arts colleges. These institutions are relatively homogeneous with respect to geographic location (in the Midwest) and reputation (relatively good). Their sizes, in numbers of full-time faculty, range from 67 to 173. Six additional colleges also provided data, and analyses were performed on the total group of 18 colleges in order to see if the findings deviated from those based on the 12 colleges. The analyses utilizing 18 colleges provided approximately the same number of significant relationships, suggesting that the findings reported here, based on only the 12 colleges, may be somewhat representative of other colleges than those studied here.

Full-time faculty members (teaching six hours or more) comprise the population studied here. Some 444 faculty members returned the questionnaires which were mailed to them, providing a response rate of about 60%. The great length of the questionnaire (over 325 items of information) and the busy period during which mailings were made (near the end of the academic year) probably were major determinants of the relatively low response rate.

The data were gathered by means of a twenty-page questionnaire. Most of the items in the questionnaire, including most of those reported here, have precoded alternatives, usually consisting of a five-point Likert-type scale. Mean

scores for each departmental characteristic were computed, weighting each member of the department equally. It is assumed that the composite of individual perceptions of departmental characteristics gives the best available measure of that characteristic. The effects of departmental characteristics on individual satisfactions, loyalty, etc., are determined by assigning the departmental mean score to each individual in the department and then correlating, across all individuals in all departments, the departmental characteristic with various individual variables. At the same time, the effects of the individual's rating or perception of the departmental characteristic is removed from the relationship by the use of the partial correlation technique. Comparing a correlation between a departmental mean score and an individual characteristic to the partial correlation for the same two variables, holding constant the individual perception of the departmental characteristic, enables one to assess the effects of individual perceptions in creating a relationship between departmental and individual characteristics. Both the zero-order and the partial correlations will be presented in the tables here. A full discussion of the background and the rationale for this form of analysis may be found in Tannenbaum and Bachman (1964). Other descriptions of the technique utilized here are provided by Bachman, Smith, and Slesinger (1966) and by Bachman (1966), while theoretical treatments and alternative methodological approaches are found in Blau (1957, 1960) and Davis, Spaeth and Huson (1961).

Communication practices were assessed using four questions: (a) Respondents were asked the frequency they gave "information (facts and ideas) concerning college affairs" to their departmental chairman, including information provided

"through discussions at meetings, in private, by letter, and telephone." A five-point scale of responses ran from "many times a week" to "once a year or less." (b) Respondents also rated the frequency with which they <u>received</u> such information from their chairman. (c) The frequency of social contact with the departmental chairman was assessed by asking respondents how often they got together "apart from college business," including "parties, community affairs, and the like." (d) Interest in faculty ideas was measured by an item concerning the extent the departmental chairman was "interested in knowing your ideas or opinions concerning college affairs." This item placed responses on a five-point scale of (5) "very much" to (1) "not at all." The responses to the four communications items are all significantly and positively associated with one another, as one might expect ($r = .35$ to $.67$, individual correlations based on an N of approximately 400).

Influence was measured in two different ways. First of all, each respondent was asked to rate the influence of <u>all</u> of the departmental chairman in his college using a five-point scale ranging from "a great deal" to "none," this measure we shall term "influence by chairmen." Secondly, a list of 24 areas of academic administration was provided, and each respondent was asked to rate his department chairman's influence in each area. An index was created from all 24 such ratings of the chairman and his influence; this measure is termed "summary influence by own chairman." The two influence measures are positively and significantly correlated ($r = .46$), but the relationship is far from unity.

The bases of compliance were assessed by asking each respondent to rank (from 1 to 5) each of five different reasons for complying with the requests and suggestions of his department chairman. The reasons given were (1) "I respect

him personally, and want to act in a way that meets his respect and admiration" (referent compliance), (2) "I respect his competence and judgement about things with which he is more experienced than I" (expert compliance), (3) "He can give special help and benefits to those who cooperate with him" (reward compliance), (4) "He can apply pressure or penalize those who do not cooperate" (coercive compliance), and (5) "He has a legitimate right considering his position, to expect that his suggestions will be carried out" (legitimate compliance). Faculty members were also requested to rank the same five bases of compliance in terms of relative importance to the chairman of their department "as reasons for doing the things you suggest or request of him." Of the 20 correlations between each of the two influence measures and the ten compliance measures, only one is significant ($r = .22$ between summary influence of own chairman and expert basis of compliance by department member to chairman), about what one would expect by chance. This seems to indicate that the measures for the bases of compliance do in fact measure the nature of compliance, relatively free from contamination from the amount of influence or compliance in the situation.

The extent of the chairman's emphasis on teaching were assessed by departmental members using a five-point scale from (5) "very high" to (1) "none." Ratings of teaching emphasis and research emphasis correlate positively ($r = .28$), but neither is related to a service emphasis.

Three "dependent variables" were examined.* (a) Satisfaction with job was measured by the agreement-disagreement with the statement: While no job can be expected to be perfect, there are really very few things that I would change about mine if I had the power to do so. (b) Satisfaction with the department chairman was measured by agreement-disagreement with the statement: All things

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*The term "dependent variable" is based on our conception of the causal sequence, rather than the use of an experimental design.

considered, I am personally quite satisfied with the way my department chairman fulfills his responsibilities. (c) Loyalty to the college was determined by asking each respondent to indicate his first choice of another college or university, and the minimum salary condition that would induce him to leave his present position to accept a similar one at the other college or university. The responses, used to measure loyalty to college, ranged from (0) "I would accept even if it involved a 20% salary reduction" to (5) "I would accept, given a salary increase of 30% or more," and (6) "I would not accept such a position, no matter how great a salary increase might be involved." Ratings of job satisfaction are relatively highly related to ratings of loyalty (r = .38) and satisfaction with the chairman (r = .36), while satisfaction with the chairman and loyalty are also positively associated (r = .20), but at a lower magnitude.

## FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the correlations between the measures of satisfaction and loyalty and the measures of the chairman's influence and the bases of compliance in the chairman-faculty relationship. The first of the two correlations reported for each pairing of variables is the zero-order correlation between the variables, while the second is the partial correlation controlling on individuals' perceptions of the departmental characteristics.

Looking first at the zero-order correlations, the one overall pattern apparent is that the second of the three dependent variables, satisfaction with the departmental chairman, is rather more strongly related to the departmental characteristics, than are the other two dependent variables. Taking into account

the more general nature of the other two variables, pertaining to the job and the college as they do, it is perhaps to be expected that they are less highly related to variables describing the chairman than is a variable specifically concerned with the chairman. This expectation is borne out in the following tables, as well. It should be noted, however, that in a few cases it appears that the departmental characteristics explain some of the variance in the global variables of satisfaction with job or loyalty to college, as was predicted.

Looking now at some of the specific departmental characteristics in Table 1, we find that one of the two measures of the chairman's influence is significantly related to all three of the dependent variables. This measure refers to the influence of a respondent's own chairman, and it is positively associated with satisfaction and loyalty as hypothesized. The other variable, measuring influence in the organization by all departmental chairmen rated as a whole, was included as a check on perceptions of respondents; by failing to show significant correlations, it provides some evidence that respondents were apparently rating departmental chairman as a whole and were not coloring this observation unduly by ratings of their own chairman.

Turning to the bases of compliance, we find almost the same pattern of correlations for both compliance to the chairman and compliance by the chairman to departmental members. Expert and referent bases of compliance are positively related to satisfaction with the chairman, while reward and coercive bases of compliance are negatively related to satisfaction with the chairman. However, compliance based on feelings of legitimacy makes for satisfaction when departmental members describe the chairman's compliance with their desires, but makes for dissatisfaction when members describe their compliance with the chairman's desires.

Looking now at the partial correlations in Table 1, we find that most of the significant relationships are reduced to non-significance by controlling on individual perceptions of departmental characteristics. The only systematic relationships remaining are those between the bases of compliance and satisfaction with the chairman, where 6 of the 10 original significant correlations remain significant after controls are applied.

An examination of the zero-order correlations used in computing the partial correlations shows that the low magnitude of the latter is due to the rather high relationship between individual measures of departmental characteristics and the mean, departmental scores for these characteristics. These correlations range between $r = .58$ and $r = .71$.

Table 2, dealing with departmental communication practices, again shows the general pattern of results found for the departmental influence characteristics shown in Table 1. Most of the significant relationships (all of which are positive in direction, as predicted) are found under satisfaction with the chairman as the dependent variable, but even these relationships are for the most part nonsignificant after controls are applied. The only exception to these findings concerns the chairman's interest in knowing the ideas of departmental members, which is significantly and positively related to all three dependent variables and continues to be significantly related to satisfaction with the chairman even after individual perceptions of chairman's interest are held constant.

Finally, Table 3 provides a number of significant and positive zero-order correlations between the chairman's emphasis on either teaching or research and the dependent satisfaction variables, as predicted. Also as hypothesized, loyalty is positively associated with a teaching emphasis, but not a research emphasis

by the chairman. A service emphasis has little effect on the dependent variables. But in all cases the partial correlations drop to non-significance or a magnitude explaining very little variance in the dependent variable.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The overall findings regarding departmental effects on faculty satisfaction and loyalty may be summarized as negative, in view of the more or less general failure for significant relationships to remain after controls for phenomenology are applied. However, the high correlations between individual perceptions of departmental characteristics and the mean score measures of departmental characteristics seem to be the source of the negative findings. Depending on how these high correlations are interpreted, a number of conclusions and implications of this study are in order.

The departmental mean scores are, it may be recalled, computed from the individual perceptions of the departmental characteristics. Since there are only 444 respondents distributed in 169 different departments, this yields only a little more than two and one-half departmental members to be aggregated per departmental mean. While there are somewhat more members in the average college department, the attrition through failure to return questionnaires reduced the number of respondents so that the departmental means are based upon, and highly related to, a few scores per department. In many cases, in fact, the two respondents in the department agree in their ratings of departmental characteristics and, therefore, the mean and individual scores are identical. This is to be contrasted with a similar analysis done with ratings of the academic deans of the 12 colleges, in which each of the college means were based on an average of over 50 respondents (Bachman, 1966). The correlations between individual and mean scores were much

lower than in the present departmental analysis, and it may be that the significant findings which remained were possible because of the relatively low correlations between individual and mean scores.

The data here do not permit one to ascertain whether the high correspondence between individual perceptual scores and departmental means is due to either (a) the existence of veridical individual perceptions, corresponding closely to the actual condition of the departmental characteristics, or (b) the existence of departmental means which contain a great deal of error variance, based as they are on a few, unstable individual scores and having a high covariance with individual scores based primarily on errors in perception.

Whether or not the zero-order correlations found here between group and individual scores are based on true or error score covariance, the fact of the high covariation presents serious problems for the analysis. This situation was recognized by Tannenbaum and Bachman (1964) when they described the analytic procedures involved in separating individual and group effects. As they put it, a situation in which groups are so disparate that individuals overlap little, offers small opportunity to control on individual effects and to assess group effects. Blalock (1962) has described the same dilemma as arises in the determination of the relative importance of each of two independent variables which are highly correlated with one another. In such a situation of "multicollinearity" any partial correlations are extremely misleading since they are very unstable and subject to minute fluctuations of error covariance. The ultimate solution for such situations, and for the present analysis problem, lies in the acquisition of data based on highly valid measures and based on a sufficient sample to enable detailed analyses which do not rely on gross summary statistics.

While the methodological issues discussed above do not point to any final conclusions regarding how the data are to be interpreted, they do suggest that the substantive relationships found here may be worthy of further study.

This view is strengthened when we note that the present zero-order findings very closely parallel those found for the college dean (Bachman, 1966). To the extent that we would expect the administrative behaviors of deans and chairman to have fairly similar effects upon faculty, this suggests that the present data are not limited to error variance.

One set of issues remaining to be settled are the dynamics of the influence-satisfaction relationship. Influence creates satisfaction, but how is this to be squared with the complaints of "autocracy" which are often heard? Is a high degree of chairman's influence usually associated with a high degree of member influence, too, thus creating the system of high mutual influence which has been shown to be associated with satisfaction and morale in organizations (Tannenbaum, 1961, 1962)? In short, the dynamics of any influence - satisfaction relationships remain to be investigated.

Part of the answer as to how influence elicits satisfaction may be perhaps found in the analysis dealing with the bases of compliance. Here, one problem deserving further research concerns the reversal in direction of relationships between legitimate compliance and satisfaction with the chairman, depending on whether it is the chairman complying with faculty or faculty complying with the chairman. The same phenomenon was found in an analysis of the same respondents' ratings of compliance relations with their college deans (Bachman, 1966).

Also important is the whole question as to the nature of the relationships to be found when respondents rate the absolute frequency or intensity of different forms of compliance, instead of ranking them. Ranking may have created in the

present data apurious negative correlations for some bases, while only the positive relationships would be valid on an absolute assessment, or *vice versa*. Absolute ratings used in the study of other types of organizations (Bachman *et. al.*, 1965) suggest very tentatively that coercive bases of compliance may be negatively associated with satisfaction, but that other bases may be either unrelated or positively related to satisfaction.

The findings concerning communication suggest that the chairman's interest in knowing departmental members' ideas is important for job satisfaction and loyalty to the college as well as for satisfaction with the departmental chairman and the way he does his job. At the very least, the *perception* of chairman's interest has these effects, and consequently, an elaboration of how such interest is communicated would be quite useful. The same is true for the chairman's emphasis on teaching, and to a lesser extent, his emphasis on research.

Both the findings on communication and on goal emphasis, together with those described earlier on influence and the bases of compliance, have been demonstrated in whole, or in part, in organizations other than colleges. This includes organizations rather unlike colleges, such as business or industrial organizations, and such correspondences can only serve to stimulate further comparative research in organizations. This is perhaps one of the most important implications of this research effort. The field of education will surely benefit if research on educational organizations is integrated with the great amount of research already, as well as presently, being done in other kinds of organizations.

## SUMMARY

Some 444 faculty members from 169 departments in 12 liberal arts colleges were surveyed in order to study the effects of departmental characteristics on faculty satisfaction with their chairman, general job satisfaction, and loyalty to the college. Relationships were predicted on the basis of research findings concerning influence and communication in other, non-educational organizations. A simple analysis demonstrated these relationships in the college data as well, but when controls were instituted to isolate structural or departmental effects from individual or perceptual effects, the relationships failed to remain. Comparison of the present analysis with a similar one dealing with college-level effects as seen by the same respondents suggested that the difficulties here may be due in part to the small number of respondents in each department. Several alternative explanations for the findings were discussed, and a number of proposals for remedying methodological problems were suggested.

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TABLE 1

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEAN DEPARTMENTAL INFLUENCE CHARACTERISTICS AND INDIVIDUAL FACULTY SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

(N = 444 Department Members)

| Departmental Influence Characteristics | Correlation between Influence Characteristics and: Satisfaction With Job | Satisfaction With Department Chairman | Loyalty To College |
|---|---|---|---|
| Influence by Chairmen | .08 | .08 | .08 |
| | .00 | -.03 | .05 |
| Summary Influence by Own Chairman | .17** | .24** | .17** |
| | .06 | .05 | .11* |
| Bases for Department Member's Compliance to Chairman | | | |
| Legitimate | -.08 | -.29** | -.07 |
| | -.03 | -.13* | -.03 |
| Expert | .18** | .38** | .12* |
| | .04 | .09 | .03 |
| Referent | .13 | .37** | .14* |
| | .00 | .12* | .02 |
| Reward | -.10 | -.23** | -.03 |
| | -.02 | -.09 | .00 |
| Coercive | -.17** | -.37** | -.17** |
| | -.02 | -.05 | -.04 |
| Bases for Chairman's Compliance to Department Members | | | |
| Legitimate | .12* | .20** | .05 |
| | .10 | .12* | .04 |
| Expert | .01 | .16** | .04 |
| | -.02 | .08 | .00 |
| Referent | .12* | .23** | .12* |
| | .05 | .11* | .06 |
| Reward | -.09 | -.26** | -.07 |
| | -.03 | -.11* | -.01 |
| Coercive | .17** | -.38** | -.14* |
| | -.08 | -.15* | -.08 |

* $p \leq .05$ one-tailed, product-moment correlation
** $p \leq .01$ one-tailed, product-moment correlation

All correlations are between the mean for the departmental characteristic and the satisfaction or loyalty score for the individual department member. Correlations in first line are zero-order correlations and, in second line, partial correlations, holding constant the individual's perception of the departmental influence characteristic. For the assignment of levels of confidence to correlations, it is assumed that partial correlations follow the same distributions as zero-order correlations.

TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEAN DEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATION PRACTICES AND INDIVIDUAL FACULTY SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

(N = 444 Department Members)

| Departmental Communication Item | Correlation between Communication and: Satisfaction With Job | Satisfaction With Department Chairman | Loyalty To College |
|---|---|---|---|
| Interest of Chairman in Knowing the Ideas of Departmental Members | .17** | .43** | .18** |
| | .00 | .17** | .09 |
| Frequency Members Communicate to Department Chairman | .04 | .15** | .10 |
| | -.02 | .05 | .03 |
| Frequency Chairman Communicates to Departmental Members | .08 | .24** | .11* |
| | .03 | .04 | .02 |
| Frequency of Social Contact with The Departmental Chairman | .14* | .21** | .09 |
| | .00 | .02 | .03 |

* $p < .05$ one-tailed, product-moment correlation
** $p < .01$ one-tailed, product-moment correlation

All correlations are between departmental mean for the communication practice and the individual score for the departmental member's satisfaction or loyalty. Correlations in the first line are zero-order correlations and, in the second line, partial correlations holding constant the individual's perception of the departmental communication practice. For the assignment of levels of confidence to correlations, it is assumed that partial correlations follow the same distribution as zero-order correlations.

TABLE 3

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE MEAN TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE EMPHASIS OF DEPARTMENTAL CHAIRMAN AND INDIVIDUAL FACULTY SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

(N = 444 Department Members)

| | Correlation between Chairman's Emphasis and: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Emphasis Item | Satisfaction With Job | Satisfaction With Department Chairman | Loyalty To College |
| Emphasis of Chairman on: | | | |
| Teaching | .15** | .29** | .22** |
| | .01 | .08 | .15** |
| Research | .12* | .32** | .10 |
| | -.02 | .10* | .00 |
| Service | .10 | .04 | .13* |
| | 106 | -.07 | .13* |

* p < .05 one-tailed, product-moment correlation
** p < .01 one-tailed, product-moment correlation

All correlations are between the mean for the chairman's emphasis and the satisfaction or loyalty score for the individual department member. Correlations in first line are zero- rder correlations and, in second line, partial correlations holding constant the individual's perception of the chairman's influence. For the assignment of levels of confidence to correlations, it is assumed that partial correlations follow the same distribution as zero-order correlations.

# ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND THEIR CLARITY IN LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES

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It is sometimes claimed in college circles that the administration does not have a clear idea of where the institution is or should be going. Complaints of this sort seem to be common in professional organizations in which administrators have a great deal of authority or legitimate power while the professionals, who "do the work" and have the knowledge required to move the organization toward its goal, have relatively little authority or power (Etzioni, 1964). If such a lack of clarity of goals does exist, it can be expected to have serious consequences for the members of the organization and, ultimately, for the effectiveness of the organization itself.

Raven and Rietsma (1957) studied goal clarity in the small group situation by making some subjects unaware or confused about the task of the group. Such unclarity created a lowering of interest in the task, greater hostility toward others, and less willingness to accept influence from the group. Cohen (1959) demonstrated that a task situation which is relatively unstructured or unclear produces threat and anxiety in response to the exercise of power by a task supervisor. In addition to these experimental studies, a number of writers have presented comprehensive discussions of goals in groups (Cartwright and Zander, 1960) and in organizations (March and Simon, 1958; Simon, 1964), including the problem of goal clarity.

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The data reported here were gathered by Jerald G. Bachman and A. Lincoln Fisch under a grant by the Carnegie Corporation, Arnold Tannenbaum, principal investigator. The work reported here was carried out with the support of the Office of Education, Small Contract Program, Project S-140, Jerald G. Bachman, principal investigator. Thanks go to Helen Bochonko for assistance in computations.

Apparently there has been as yet no study of the clarity of goals as properties of on-going organizations. The present paper presents some relevant data which were obtained through a survey of 12 liberal arts colleges. An assessment of the clarity of purpose or goals in these colleges is presented here, together with a description of the kinds of goals for the college held by college officials and by faculty members. Then, the clarity of organizational goals is related to the descriptive data in order to determine how the nature of goals held by organizational members might effect the clarity of goals the organization is seen to have.

## METHOD

The organizations studied here are all 12 members of a regional association of liberal arts colleges. These institutions are relatively homogeneous with respect to geographic location (in midwestern United States) and reputation (relatively good). Their sizes, in numbers of full-time faculty, range from 67 to 173. All full-time faculty members (teaching six hours or more) were asked to complete questionnaires. The academic dean and the department heads also provided data, regardless of their teaching load. Some 687 faculty members returned the questionnaires which were mailed to them, providing a response rate of about 60%. The great length of the questionnaire (over 325 items of information) and the busy period during which mailings were made (near the end of the academic year) probably were major determinants of the relatively low response rate.

The data were gathered by means of a twenty-page questionnaire, consisting mostly of pre-coded items with five-point Likert scales. Mean scores for each college were computed, weighting each respondent equally. The unit of analysis is the college, with N = 12, and product-moment correlations between college scores are used to describe relationships.

The clarity of organizational goals was measured by the following item: "In general, how clear and consistent a conception of institutional purposes do you think your college officials have?" Response categories were: "(5) Very Clear, (4) Clear, (3) Neutral, (2) Vague, (1) Very Vague".

In assessing the meaning of clarity of organizational goals, the following item was utilized: "Colleges usually seek to serve more than one purpose, but not all purposes can receive equal emphasis. Below are listed several possible purposes that might be held by a liberal arts college". Respondents were then asked to rate a list of 16 goals or purposes (found in Tables 1 and 2) according to how important (with a 5-point scale from "Very High" to "None") each was (a) to the college officials and (b) to the faculty respondent himself.

## RESULTS

While the data do not show the twelve colleges differ greatly in the clarity of goals which their officials are seen as having, sufficient variability exists to make useful an analysis of the correlates of such clarity. The scores ranged from 3.2 (just better than"neutral") to 4.3 (between "clear" and "very clear").

In Table 1 are found the sixteen different goals which faculty members rated according to their importance to themselves and to the administrative officials of their college. The mean score over all twelve colleges is given. These range from "low importance" (1.8) for "provide a worthy alternative to unemployed youth" to nearly "very high importance" (4.7) for "transmit knowledge". While the rated importance to faculty is roughly comparable to the ratings for officials, the third column in the table shows that the average difference can range from zero up to almost a whole scale point.

In order to determine whether the clarity of organizational goals might be associated with the prevalance of certain goals in the colleges, the correlations shown in Table 2 were computed. In general, the rated importance of the various

goals to the faculty is not related to clarity of organizational goals which the college officials are perceived as having (see the first column of the table). The single significant correlation might be expected by chance in such a number of correlations.

On the other hand, the rated importance of goals to officials is significantly related to clarity of organizational goals (see the second column of Table 2) in the case of 6 of the 16 different goals given. Comparison of these significant correlations to the corresponding means and discrepancies in Table 1 suggests that these six goals seem to be ones which are on the average rated as relatively important to both faculty and officials and which are also of somewhat differing importance to these two groups. Correlating over the 16 items the average importance of a goal to officials (see Table 1) with the correlation coefficient (converted to z) between clarity and importance to officials (see Table 2) yields a significant and positive coefficient. Similarly, correlating the average discrepancy with clarity also yields a significant positive coefficient. In other words, clarity of goals is highly associated with the importance of certain goals to college officials. These goals are ones which are, on the average, important to officials and seen with a difference in importance by officials and faculty.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

While the descriptive data presented on the importance of various goals to faculty and officials is of interest, the findings concerning clarity of goals and its relationship to the feelings of faculty and officials regarding different kinds of goals are perhaps ultimately of greater interest. Clarity of goals appears to be critical for individual and organizational functioning, and the data here suggest that college officials are perceived as having such clarity of

goals under rather special conditions - when there is a lack of conflict between faculty and officials about certain goals which are of mutual importance. In other words, clarity is associated with perceptions by the faculty that officials view as important (and more or less equally important) the goals that the faculty feel are important.

The dynamics involved in how this relationship occurs cannot be determined from the data available in the present study, and further investigation in this area is necessary. Further study is also needed because the methodological procedure utilized here for measuring these variables leaves the findings open to an alternative explanation. Namely, the clarity or unclarity of goals attributed to college officials by faculty members may be merely a perceptual phenomenon, unreflective of the actual state of affairs among officials. However, even if independent measurement of clarity of goals was found to be unrelated to the measures of importance and differences in importance found here, the perceptual relationship still stands as a finding worthy of note. The feeling by organizational members that important and influential officers in the organization are unclear about goals can be expected to have dysfunctional effects on both individual and organizational behavior. Thus we find, for example, that colleges with faculty perceiving unclarity of goals among their officials are also colleges in which faculty show a high readiness to leave for another institution ($r = .52$).

Another caution in regard to the findings here reported on organizational goals has to do with the operational definition of goals implicit in the study. Cartwright and Zander (1960) have highlighted the difference between goals which members may have for an organization and the goals of the organization qua organization (i.e., on the organizational level of analysis). However, they rightly cite the difficulty in operationalizing the latter conceptualization of goals,

compared to the former. While a conceptualization on the organizational level of analysis is preferable on theoretical grounds, difficulties in operationalizing such a definition are only now being clarified (see, for example, Warriner, 1964; Simon 1964).

It is clear that the above qualifications to the research reported here demand careful and extensive treatment in further investigations. Such research should also give consideration to the theoretical and conceptual issue raised here -- the place of conflict in the concept of clarity. The data in the present study do not permit one to assess the relative importance of ambiguity or lack of information as opposed to the importance of conflict in creating lack of clarity, but the above findings certainly suggest that one should consider conflict as one possible aspect of unclarity in goals. In the experimental study by Raven and Rietsma, (1957), for example, ambiguity and conflict as aspects of unclarity were confounded. Information on the goal was withheld from experimental group members, but, in addition, they were given information about a goal which was in conflict with the goal held by other group members. Kahn and his associates (1964) have shown that ambiguity and conflict have some common effects on individuals, but that their effects also diverge in some ways. It is likely that an examination of the place of conflict and ambiguity in the clarity-unclarity of goals would be important for the study of organizations, as well.

## SUMMARY

A sample of 12 liberal arts colleges was studied to assess the importance of various organizational goals. Faculty members rated the importance of various goals to themselves and their apparent importance to college officials, as well. The faculty also rated the clarity of organizational goals held by college officials. Clarity was found to be related to a lack of conflict between faculty and officials about certain goals of mutual importance. The major conclusion drawn from the study is that the place of conflict in the clarity-unclarity of organizational goals is worthy of further investigation.

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TABLE 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF VARIOUS COLLEGE GOALS TO COLLEGE OFFICIALS AND FACULTY AS RATED BY FACULTY

(N = 12 Colleges)

| Goal Measures | Mean* Importance To Faculty | Mean* Importance To Officials | Difference Between Means |
|---|---|---|---|
| Transmit our cultural heritage | 4.0 | 4.0 | .0 |
| Transmit knowledge | 4.7 | 4.2 | .5 |
| Develop students' religious values | 3.2 | 3.8 | .6 |
| Develop students' personal qualities: judgment, character, morals | 4.2 | 4.0 | .2 |
| Develop students' awareness and understanding of political, social and economic issues | 4.2 | 3.6 | .6 |
| Instill the ideals of intelligent democratic citizenship | 4.1 | 3.8 | .3 |
| Develop students to the limit of their intellectual capacities | 4.3 | 4.0 | .3 |
| Prepare students for specific vocational careers | 2.9 | 3.0 | .1 |
| Prepare students for a lifetime of continuing education | 4.4 | 3.8 | .6 |
| Provide society with people of certain crucial skills (teachers, leaders, etc.) | 3.6 | 3.6 | .0 |
| Provide certain services for a supporting constituency (church, alumni, etc.) | 2.5 | 3.3 | .8 |
| Through the faculty, carry out research and original investigation | 3.7 | 3.1 | .6 |
| Take a leadership role in the resolution of society's problems | 3.7 | 3.2 | .5 |
| Provide a worthy alternative to unemployed youth | 1.8 | 1.9 | .1 |
| Provide certain services for a geographic area and serve as a cultural center for the local community | 3.2 | 3.2 | .0 |
| Prepare students for a healthy family life | 2.9 | 2.9 | .0 |

*Based on a five-point scale from 1 (no importance) to 5 (very high importance)

TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CLARITY OF GOALS
AND VARIOUS GOAL IMPORTANCE MEASURES

(N = 12 Colleges)

| | Correlation between clarity of goals and: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Goal Measures | Importance To Faculty - | Importance To Officials | Faculty-Official Discrepancy |
| Transmit our cultural heritage | .21 | .39 | .14 |
| Transmit knowledge | .33 | .63 * | -.33 |
| Develop students' religious values | -.16 | -.46 | -.42 |
| Develop students' personal qualities: judgment, character, morals | .18 | -.06 | .02 |
| Develop students' awareness and understanding of political, social and economic issures | .10 | .61 * | .58 * |
| Instill the ideals of intelligent democratic citizenship | .01 | .44 | -.36 |
| Develop students to the limit of their intellectual capacities | .32 | .73 ** | -.58* |
| Prepare students for specific vocational careers | -.19 | -.56 * | .27 |
| Prepare students for a lifetime of continuing education | .14 | .89 ** | -.84 ** |
| Provide society with people of certain crucial skills (teachers, leaders, etc.) | -.23 | -.27 | -.10 |
| Provide certain services for a supporting constituency (church, alumni, etc.) | -.35 | -.54 * | -.40 |
| Through the faculty, carry out research and original investigation | -.52* | .41 | -.53 |
| Take a leadership role in the resolution of society's problems | -.13 | .28 | -.44 |
| Provide a worthy alternative to unemployed youth | -.40 | -.37 | -.24 |
| Provide certain services for a geographic area and serve as a cultural center for the local community | .06 | .05 | -.26 |
| Prepare students for a healthy family life | .10 | -.22 | .46 |

* $p < .05$ one-tailed, product moment correlation
** $p < .01$ one-tailed, product moment correlation

# THE DETERMINANTS OF CLARITY IN ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

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The nature of the goals or purposes of an organization are of vital significance to the organization. In fact, the achievement of a goal may be viewed as the raison d'etre of the organization (Parsons, 1956). In order to work towards some purpose, individuals come together and create an organization, a means to an end (or ends). Our concern here will be to explore one aspect of goals -- clarity, and some of its determinants, in the liberal arts college.

Goals or purposes which are not clear will prevent the organization from being used by its members in an effective manner (March and Simon, 1958). The combined efforts of the organizational members may be no more productive than their efforts alone. In a laboratory experiment, Raven and Rietsma (1957) have demonstrated that groups with unclear goals provide a number of difficulties for the adjustment of their members. Compared to clarity in goals, a lack of clarity creates lower interest in the task as well as greater hostility. There is also less involvement in the group, less sympathy with other members and less willingness to accept influence from other members. These findings indicate the importance to organizations of clarity in their goals.

We shall assume here that at least two kinds of clarity-unclarity may characterize the goals or purposes of organizations. First of all, a goal may be clear or unclear according to the knowledge organizational members have concerning it. A clear goal means there is full information, or that there is an

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absence of ambiguity among members. In the Raven and Rietsma (1957) study, unclarity was created by withholding information about the goal from group members. Secondly, the possession of a clear goal by an organization implies that there is a consensus among members regarding the goal of the organization. If there is conflict between organizational members or between sub-groups about the goals of the organization, then the organization cannot be said to possess a clear goal. Raven and Rietsma also utilized conflict in creating unclarity in their experimental groups. Members of these groups were given goal information which was in conflict with the goal information held by other members of the group.

If a clear goal implies the presence of information about the goal as well as a consensus among individuals regarding the goal, then it seems highly probable that communication and influence processes are involved as determinants of goal clarity. Of the two processes, communication is likely to be of lesser importance, serving only as a prerequisite for goal clarity -- as a necessary but not sufficient condition. The nature of the organizational goal must be communicated to the members if lack of knowledge or ambiguity is to be avoided. The vertical lines of communication, between superior and subordinate or between adjacent status levels in the organization, are often of particular importance, since goals are frequently created at the higher levels of the organization and then communicated to subordinates. In professional organizations, communication upward from the professionals who perform the major productive functions of the organization (Etzioni, 1964) to the administrative echelons is also likely to be relevant for goal clarity.

However, communication of a goal does not imply acceptance. Despite the reception of a communication, the content may be rejected by the recipient. If the recipient of a communication is to accept the organizational goal which has been communicated to him, he must be influenced in some fashion to do so. Through the effects of a number of kinds of influence processes, individuals may come to accept or commit themselves to a goal which has been communicated, and further, consensus across organizational members may be achieved regarding the particular goal which is accepted. The influence of key individulas in the hierarchy may create consensus if these individuals are sufficiently influential *vis a vis* most of the other members of the organization. In small groups, for example, the formal leader can create clear goals, or knowledge and consensus regarding goals, among the members of the group. Cohesive groups, or groups in which members have a high degree of influence over one another (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959), also tend to have a common goal (or goals) accepted by the members (Schachter, *et al.*, 1951). The organizational analogue to the cohesive group is an organization in which various members at all hierarchical levels of the organization have a high degree of influence over one another. In such a situation of mutual influence, or "high total control" (Tannenbaum, 1961, 1962), we might then expect general consensus and conformity regarding the goals of the organization.

Using a typology of bases or sources of compliance derived from French and Raven's (1960) bases of social power, a number of studies have shown that compliance based on expert or referent power is positively associated with organizational effectiveness and satisfaction with one's superior. Reward, coercive, and, to some extent, legitimate bases of compliance tend to be negatively associated with effectiveness and satisfaction. The dynamics of these relationships

are not yet clear, but the findings suggest that the bases of compliance are similarly related to goal clarity as well, particularly the bases of compliance in the influence relationship between the faculty and the college dean. In an organization concerned with creating and transmitting knowledge, as is the college, influence based on expertness will be most in line with values and will be most acceptable. A condition of consensus regarding goals is also likely to be effected by means of referent power. In the examination of the ultimate ends or values of the organization, knowledge and reason cannot suffice. The inspirational leader, seeking to influence by eliciting emulation, is also likely to be acceptable and effective in creating consensus and consequently clear goals. Referent influence, while perhaps not as common in colleges as expert influence, is acceptable because of its voluntary nature -- voluntary in the sense of freedom from external constraints, which is consonant with the expected autonomy of the professional. Influence based on organizational rules (legitimate influence) or based on external sanctions (reward or coercive) does not have this acceptability for the member of the professional organization, and such influence is likely to be met with resistance. Clarity of organizational purpose based on even mere overt consensus regarding goals will probably be relatively difficult to establish by these bases of compliance.

In summary then, we assume that goal clarity is comprised to varying degree of a distribution across organizational members of both knowledge about organizational goals as well as consensus or agreement about the goals. Two determinants of such clarity in goals are suggested. The amount of communication between organizational members, especially members of different hierarchical positions,

is expected to be positively associated with clarity of organizational purpose, since a purpose must be first communicated in order to gain its acceptance by members of the organization. More importantly, the process of influence serves both to communicate and to gain acceptance of purposes for an organization. The acceptance of the same goal, the consensus aspect of goal clarity, is especially facilitated by a high degree of influence by goal setting personnel as well as by a high degree of mutual influence by members at all levels in the organization. Finally, we predict that the mode of compliance typical in the organization is likely to affect the degree of consensus and consequent clarity of purposes. Research findings in other organizations and the professional values of the college together argue that expert and referent bases of compliance will be more conducive to clarity of purpose then legitimate, reward, or coercive bases of compliance.

## METHOD

The organizations studied here are all 12 of the members of a regional association of liberal arts colleges. These institutions are relatively homogeneous with respect to geographic location (in the Midwest) and reputation (relatively good). Their sizes, in numbers of full-time faculty, range from 67 to 173. Six additional colleges also provided data, and analyses were performed on the total group of 18 colleges to determine if the findings deviated from those based on the 12 colleges. The analyses utilizing 18 colleges provided approximately the same number of significant relationships, suggesting that the findings reported here, based on only the 12 colleges, may possibly be somewhat representative of other colleges as well as those studied here.

Full-time faculty members (teaching six hours or more) comprise the population studied here. In addition, the academic dean and the department heads provided data, regardless of their teaching load. Some 687 faculty members returned the questionnaire which was mailed to them, providing a response rate of about 60%. The great length of the questionnaire (over 325 items of information) and the busy period during which mailings were made (near the end of the academic year) probably were major determinants of the relatively low response rate.

The data were gathered by means of a twenty-page questionnaire. Most of the items in the questionnaire, including most of those reported here, have precoded alternatives, usually consisting of a five-point Likert scale. Mean scores for each college were computed, weighting each respondent equally. The unit of analysis is the college, with N = 12, and product-moment correlations between college scores are used to describe relationships.

The clarity of organizational goals was measured by the following items: "In general, how clear and consistent a conception of institutional purposes do you think your college officials have?" Response categories were: "(5) Very Clear, (4) Clear, (3) Neutral (2) Vague, (1) Very Vague."

Communication practices, or information given and information received, were assessed by asking the respondents to rate the frequency "information (facts and ideas) concerning college affairs" was given to and received from, the president, academic dean, departmental chairman, and other faculty. Respondents were to include information received "through discussions at meetings, in private, by letter, and telephone." A five-point scale of responses ran from (5) "many times a week" to (1) "Once a year or less". The frequency of off-campus contact was

assessed by asking respondents how often they got together "apart from college business" including "parties, community affairs, and the like". Interest in faculty ideas was measured by a similar item concerning the extent the dean (or chairman, etc.) was "interested in knowing your ideas or opinions concerning college affairs" and a five-point scale of (5) "very much" to (1) "not at all".

A number of items were used to measure aspects of influence. The influence which six different groups or persons "actually have in determining the policies and actions of your college" was rated, each group separately, on a five-point scale ranging from (5) "a great deal" to (1) "none". The total influence, or the influence by all six groups or persons in the college, was taken as the mean of the six influence scores. The bases of compliance were assessed by asking respondents to rank (from 1 to 5) each of five different reasons for complying, when they were "asked to do things their supervisors (in this case, the dean) suggest or want them to do". The reasons given were (a) "I respect him personally, and want to act in a way that meets his respect and admiration" (referent compliance), (b) "I respect his competence and judgment about things with which he is more experienced than I" (expert compliance), (c) "He can give special help and benefits to those who cooperate with him" (reward compliance), (d) "He can apply pressure or penalize those who do not cooperate" (coercive compliance), and (e) "He has a legitimate right considering his position, to expect that his suggestions will be carried out" (legitimate compliance). Faculty members were also requested to rank the same five bases of compliance in terms of relative importance to the dean "as reasons for doing the things you suggest or request of him".

## FINDINGS

Table 1 shows the correlations between various communication items and the clarity of goals college officials are seen as having. None of the correlations between the frequency of giving or receiving information and clarity of goals reaches significance. If, on the other hand, a measure of receptivity to communication is used, the interest by others in faculty communications, then a strong relationship is found between the dean's interest and ratings of clarity of goals. A summary measure for the interest of all four levels is also significantly related to clarity, but controlling on dean's interest shows that the latter variable accounts for all of the covariance in the relationship.

Some of the more interesting measures of communication shown in Table 1 are those concerned with faculty contacts off-campus with the college president, dean, departmental chairmen, etc. These, too, are frequency measures of communication, but the kind of communication is obviously different in some important respect from the other measures of communication frequency described above, for, in each case, frequency of off-campus contacts with other categories of college personnel is significantly and positively associated with clarity of organizational goals. While the measures of the frequency of off-campus contact are correlated very highly with most of the other communication measures listed in Table 1, these communication measures are generally not related to clarity and so they cannot "explain" the relationship between off-campus contact and clarity of goals. Similarly, while two of the off-campus contact items are significantly related to measures of influence (e.g., off-campus contact with other faculty and influence of faculty are correlated very highly -- r = .78), the other three off-campus contact items are not, thus obviating the possibility of an explanation of the

systematic relationships between off-campus contact and clarity by means of influence. It appears that off-campus contacts are not clearly or systematically interpretable in terms of any of the other variables under study here.

Table 2 presents the relationships between influence and clarity of organizational goals. Again we find that the dean is important in the creation of a college with clear goals. In addition to the interest which he expresses in faculty ideas, the amount of his influence over the actions and policies of the college is also highly associated with clarity of goals. However, since dean's interest and dean's influence are highly associated ($r = .78$), it is possible that the former variable explains or mediates the relationship of the latter with clarity. The second significant correlation in the table is between the measure of influence for all levels ("total influence") and clarity. Controlling on the amount of influence by the dean, the correlation between influence for all six levels and clarity is reduced in magnitude, approaching but not reaching significance ($r = .45$). This suggests that the dean's influence may account for the second significant correlation in the table. Finally, faculty influence as well as student influence almost reach a significant level of relationship with clarity.

Consonant with the above findings regarding the relationship of the dean and his behavior to the clarity of the goals of the college, Table 3 demonstrates that how the faculty comply with the dean's influence attempts is also highly associated with clarity of goals. Looking at the first half of the table, we find that if the faculty comply because they see the dean as voicing expert opinion or if they comply because they see the dean as a likable person, the institution's goals are seen as relatively clear. Compliance based on rewards,

punishments, or feelings of authoritative necessity shows the opposite, negative relationship with the dependent variable. It should be noted that these relationships between the bases of faculty compliance to the dean and clarity are not to be interpreted in terms of the amount of the dean's influence and its effects on clarity. The ranking in importance of one basis of compliance or another is for the most part unrelated to the amount of the dean's influence, only one of the ten correlations barely reaching significance.

The second half of Table 3, showing correlations between the ranking in importance of the bases of the dean's compliance and goal clarity, is somewhat similar to the first half of the table, but two of the correlations do not reach significance.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A number of the findings pertaining to relationships between communication and clarity of goals did not support the expectation of a positive association. These relationships, dealing with communication to the faculty from others, and vice versa, contrast with the significant relationships found for off-campus or non-college contacts between faculty and others. While the data do not permit one to determine how these latter, significant relationships are mediated, several hypotheses may be proposed. Since off-campus contacts are probably more voluntary than those required by one's role on campus during the day, it is likely that participants in these contacts are attracted to one another and are somewhat receptive to influence attempts. In short, it is suggested that perhaps colleges with greater off-campus contacts among their personnel are also

colleges with clarity of purpose, because such contacts provide an opportunity for the effective transmission of influence and the consequent establishment of a consensus regarding the purposes of the college.

Of the measures of interest by others in finding out faculty ideas or opinions, the interest of the dean, but not that of others such as the president or departmental chairman, was related to clarity. This finding, together with the similar finding that the influence of the dean, but not others, is related to clarity, suggests the preeminent position of the dean in affairs dealing with the college and its goals. The role of the president of the college is apparently concerned primarily with external matters, with relations to alumni, to scources of funds, and to other colleges and the public at large. On the other hand, departmental chairmen are "men in the middle", they are the professionals on the line and they are also concerned with administrative matters, with policy and with organizational direction. But with regard to organizational direction, the chairman is evidently concerned primarily with the directions in which his own department should move, and questions of overall organizational goals are secondary if they are a matter of concern at all. This leaves the academic dean as the primary official concerned with the overall goals of the organization. His responsibility is the college as a whole, and yet he is not so far removed from day-to-day running of the organization that his influence would count for little in determining the directions the organization should take in utilizing its resources. It is thus that the interest of the dean, his influence, and the bases of his compliance are associated with the clarity of institutional goals.

A caution which must be applied to all of the findings described above concerns the direction of causal influence which has been assumed. While we have started with the phenomenon of clarity in institutional goals and asked what its sources or determinants were, it is also possible that clarity of goals is causally prior to the communication and influence processes we have discussed. The survey method makes it extremely difficult to assess such causal priorities (for some techniques, see Blalock, 1964; Pelz and Andrews, 1964). However, it is probably safe to say that the relationships found here are likely to be in some degree circular or bi-directional in nature. Thus, for example, a high degree of influence by the group over its members will be conducive to consensus and clarity regarding group goals, but, in turn, a high degree of consensus and clarity will provide the group with more power over its members (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959).

A further caution in interpreting the findings here concerns the procedures utilized for measuring variables -- procedures which leave the findings open to an alternative explanation. Namely, the clarity or unclarity of goals attributed to college officials by faculty members may be merely a perceptual phenonenon, unreflective of the actual state of affairs among officials. However, even if independent measurement of clarity of goals was found to be unrelated to the various measures of communication and influence studied here, the perceptual relationship still stands as a finding worthy of note. The feeling by organizational members that important and influential officers in the organization are unclear about goals can be expected to have dysfunctional effects for both individual and organizational behavior. Thus we find, for example, that colleges with faculty perceiving unclarity of goals among their officials

are also colleges in which faculty show a high readiness to leave for another institution (r= .52).

A final caution in regard to the findings here reported on organizational goals has to do with the operational definition of goals implicit in the study. Cartwright and Zander (1960) have highlighted the difference between goals which members may have for an organization and the goals of the organization qua organization (i.e., on the organizational level of analysis). However, they rightly cite the difficulty in operationalizing the latter conceptualization of goals, compared to the former. While a conceptualization on the organizational level of analysis is preferable on theoretical grounds, difficulties in operationalizing such a definition are only now being clarified (see, for example, Warriner, 1964; Simon 1964).

In general, it appears that the findings lend some support for our approach to clarity of goals in terms of the effects of communication and influence processes on knowledge and consensus about organizational purposes. Since neither knowledge nor consensus was measured separately, nor was clarity measured more extensively than by a single questionnaire item, the findings here can be viewed as suggesting only that further research on the place of knowledge and consensus in the nature of goal clarity would not be a useless exercise. However, some tentative evidence already exists showing that at least the perception of intergroup conflict (i.e., lack of consensus) is associated with unclear goals in organizations (Wieland, 1966).

Further research on goal clarity might do well to become part of a broader effort at the examination of the structural dimensions of goals, much as has been done rather successfully by Jackson (1960) in connection with norms. Such

goal dimensions might include "evaluation, intensity, range, crystallization, ambiguity, scope, integration," etc.. In point of fact, Jackson"s typology could be easily utilized for the study of goals, since as Thibaut and Kelley (1959) have indicated, goals are only a special kind of norm. An explicit treatment of goals as norms would make readily apparent the relevance to the study of goals of a great deal of research on norms. Recent findings by Kahn and associates (1964) concerning the effects of normative ambiguity and conflict are most suggestive of hypotheses for the consequences of ambiguity and conflict in goals. Only if the clarity and other properties of goals are viewed in a generic fashion, will systematic study of this vital aspect of organizations become feasible.

## SUMMARY

In order to study the sources of clarity in organizational goals, it was assumed that clarity is comprised of a distribution of goal information as well as consensus or agreement among the members, too. On this basis, communication and influence processes were implicated as probable determinants of goal clarity. Some 687 respondents in 12 liberal arts colleges were surveyed to test the hypotheses. While the frequency of use of various communication channels was not associated with clarity, it was found that the interest of the dean in faculty ideas and the frequency of off-campus, non-college contacts between various ranks in the college were both positively associated with clarity in the goals of the college. An examination of the bases of compliance in relations between faculty and the dean elicited positive correlations between clarity and the use of expert and referent bases and negative correlations between clarity and the use of reward and coercive bases. In addition to a discussion of the findings, several cautions were given regarding (1) the causal

inference permissible from the data, (2) the limitations in the data sources utilized in the study, and (3) the nature of the operational definition of goal used in the study. Finally, it was recommended that further study of the properties of goals, including clarity, be made systematic and congruent with the study of norms in organizations.

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TABLE 1

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNICATION PRACTICES
AND CLARITY OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

(N = 12 Colleges)

| Communication Items | Correlation with Clarity of Organizational Goals |
|---|---|
| Frequency faculty receive information from: | |
| President | -.20 |
| Academic Dean | .21 |
| Department Chairman | .26 |
| Other Faculty | .02 |
| Summary measure for all four levels | .08 |
| Frequency faculty give information to: | |
| President | .07 |
| Academic Dean | .39 |
| Department Chairman | .24 |
| Other Faculty | .35 |
| Summary measure for all four levels | .30 |
| Interest in faculty ideas or opinions by: | |
| President | .27 |
| Academic Dean | .81** |
| Department Chairmen | .26 |
| Other Faculty | -.09 |
| Summary measure for all four levels | .61* |
| Frequency of faculty off-campus contact with: | |
| President | .55* |
| Academic Dean | .74** |
| Department Chairmen | .64* |
| Other Faculty | .54* |
| Summary measure for all four levels | .77** |

* p $\leq$ .05 one-tailed, product moment correlation
** p $\leq$ .01 one-tailed, product moment correlation

TABLE 2

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INFLUENCE AND CLARITY OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

(N = 12 Colleges)

| Influence Measure | Correlation with Clarity of Organizational Goals |
|---|---|
| Amount of influence over actions and policies of the college, exerted by: | |
| Trustees | -.18 |
| President | -.12 |
| Dean | .74** |
| Chairman | -.05 |
| Faculty | .45 |
| Students | .47 |
| All six organizational levels | .67** |

* p $<$ .05 one-tailed, product moment correlation
** p $<$ .01 one-tailed, product moment correlation

TABLE 3

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BASES OF COMPLIANCE
AND CLARITY OF ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

(N = 12 colleges)

| Compliance Measure | Correlation with Clarity of Organizational Goals |
|---|---|
| Bases of Faculty Compliance with Dean's Desires | |
| Legitimate | -.56* |
| Expert | .77** |
| Referent | .78** |
| Reward | -.78** |
| Coercive | -.78** |
| Basses of Dean's Compliance with Faculty Desires | |
| Legitimate | .44 |
| Expert | .56* |
| Referent | .32 |
| Reward | -.68** |
| Coercive | -.64* |

* $p < .05$ one-tailed, product moment correlations
** $p < .01$ one-tailed, product moment correlations